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Human Development Report

Update on Human Development Report consultations

1. In January 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/57/264, in which it invited the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA to include a separate agenda item on the *Human Development Report* (HDR) in its annual work plan. The aim of the resolution is to improve the consultation process with Member States regarding the HDR in order to improve its quality and accuracy without compromising its editorial independence.

2. In line with that resolution, the Human Development Report Office took steps to improve the quality of consultations with Member States and with the wider community of human development practitioners; those steps are summarized below. Following a brief description of the process of updating the human development index undertaken in 2008, the present note reviews the thematic network consultations underpinning the selection of the theme of HDR 2009; the informal Executive Board consultations held during its preparation; and the broad range of participatory consultations conducted with experts worldwide.

3. In December 2008, *Human Development Indices: A statistical update 2008* was released. For the first time the human development index was released separately from the main report so as to explain some significant changes in the underlying data. In particular, improved estimates of purchasing power parities implied substantial adjustments for many countries, resulting in changes in human development index values and, in many cases, ranks. The statistical update includes an examination of inequalities in income and gender within and between countries, and suggests improvements in measuring gender equality and women's empowerment. The report, which presents data for 2006, is available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/mediacentre/news/title,15493,en.html.

4. Earlier in 2008, the Human Development Report Office held a special network consultation to choose the theme for HDR 2009. A 'virtual'

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discussion took place over several weeks on the HDR network (HDRNet), the UNDP resident representatives' network, the democratic governance network and the capacity development network. The HDRNet is free and open to anyone who wishes to join. At present it encompasses more than 1,400 members, including United Nations staff, academia, and civil society, as well as members of the Executive Board. In June 2008, HDRO announced that HDR 2009 would be on migration, and a summary of the discussion was posted on the HDR website. During the network discussion, many respondents expressed support and enthusiasm for the proposed theme marking the 20th anniversary of the HDR, which will provide an opportunity to review its contribution to development thinking and assess its impact on policy and practice. Board members wishing to be regularly updated on the activities of the Human Development Report Offices are invited to subscribe to HDRNet by sending an email to hdr-net@groups.undp.org.

5. In the course of preparing the HDR 2009, the Human Development Report Office held three informal consultations with the Executive Board. The first, on 17 November 2008, reviewed the concept note and outline. That consultation offered the new Director of HDRO the opportunity to introduce herself to the Board. The Director presented the starting point for *Human Development Report 2009: Human Development on the Move*, which is that mobility is an expression of human development, which expands choices of individuals and their families to improve their opportunities, at the same time recognizing that underlying inequalities, policies and institutions affect the processes and outcomes of human mobility. The Director highlighted innovations in the process, most notably the regional and global consultations that were held to solicit useful local knowledge on the topic of migration (see paragraph 7). The discussion that followed underlined the relevance and complexity of the theme and touched upon the need to add a human development perspective to the existing literature on migration. Delegates thanked the Human Development Report Office for organizing the consultations, which they characterized as useful, commended the work, and expressed strong support to the editorial independence of the report. The constructive comments and suggestions made by delegates are being taken into consideration in preparing HDR 2009.

6. After this first informal consultation with the Executive Board two further meetings were scheduled prior to the release of the report in October 2009. The meetings would focus on the key findings of the research and writing process; the statistical data presented in the report; and the main messages contained in the report.

7. From the outset, and in the spirit of General Assembly resolution A/RES/57/264, the elaboration of the HDR 2009 has been distinguished by a range of participatory consultations designed to draw on the expertise of researchers, civil society advocates, development practitioners and policymakers from around the world. Nine regional informal stakeholder consultations, involving about 235 experts, were held between August 2008 and January 2009, in Amman, Bratislava, Dakar, Manila, Nairobi, New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney and Turin. Several events were co-hosted with key partners, including the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organisation,

and the World Bank. Additional stakeholder and academic consultations took place in Geneva, Washington and Princeton, and staff from the Human Development Report Office participated in various other regional and global forums, including the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Manila, preparatory meetings for the Global Forum on Migration and Development to be held in Athens, and many conferences and seminars organized by entities such as the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the and United Nations Institute for Training and Research, universities, 'think-tanks' and non-governmental organizations.

8. An academic advisory panel comprised of eminent thinkers and practitioners in migration and human development was constituted to advise during the preparation of the HDR. They held two face-to-face meetings (one in November 2008 and one in March 2009), complemented by online interactions. The UNDP readers' group, representing all the regional bureaux, had an opportunity to review and discuss the report at several stages. More broadly, the Human Development Report Office launched and hosted a new seminar series, open to staff and development practitioners, to explore different aspects of migration. By the end of March 2009, such seminars had involved about 400 participants. More information on these and other HDR-related activities for 2009 can be found at http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009.

9. In addition to the consultation on theme selection described in paragraph 4, two further 'virtual network' discussions of HDR 2009 were held. In August 2008, an initial query attracted contributions from about 20 countries, and from every region. UNDP staff, representatives of civil society and academia, and professionals participated in the online discussion (http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/networks/replies/Global_HDR_query_20_11_08.pdf contains a consolidated reply). The third network discussion was launched in February 2009 to gather country and regional evidence of the costs associated with internal and international migration, and 'life stories' of individuals, families and communities affected by different aspects of migration. That discussion also provided the Human Development Report Office with an opportunity to share a preliminary summary of chapters. At the end of the consultation, a summary of the discussion will be posted on the Human Development Report Office page of the UNDP website.

10. Insights and discussions arising from these diverse communities of practitioners throughout the consultations have helped the HDR team to frame the content of HDR 2009 and enrich its analysis. The Human Development Report Office is committed to preparing of the HDR in a neutral and transparent manner and in full, effective consultation with Member States, with due regard to the use of resources and the impartial nature of the report.